REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, Applicants note that the Attorney Docket Number for this application is "**426.38**" and not the docket number specified on the Office action. Attorney for Applicants has changed the docket number accordingly in the Private PAIRS system of the USPTO.

In the Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment mailed December 3, 2007:

The Examiner noted that the status of claims 87-122 is unclear and that the amendment of claim 20 is not accurate.

Claims 1-122 are pending in the application.

Claims 1-11, 14-19, 34, 43, 44, 55-62, 66 and 86 are canceled to obviate claim rejections.

Claim 27 is amended to correct an obvious dependency error. Claim 65 is amended to correct an obvious omission.

Claims 12, 20, and 35 are rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims and to overcome objections to the claims. Claim 12 is further amended to overcome objections to the drawings. Claim 20 is further amended to correct the inaccuracy noted by the Examiner in the Notice on Non-Compliant Amendment.

Claims 41, 45, 53, 63, and 67 are rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim.

Claims 87-122 are canceled from the application as not being drawn to elected claims Group I and to clarify the status of these claims in response to the Examiner's Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment.

Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment

With regard to the Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment mailed December 3, 2007, the Examiner states:

> The status of claims 87-122 is unclear. The claims are listed with a status identifier of "Withdrawn", however, all the text of the claims has been stricken. If claims are withdrawn, the text must be included. Further, applicant's remarks list claims 1-122 as pending and list claims 87-122 as being canceled and withdrawn. Claims cannot be cancelled and withdrawn. They must be one or the other. ... Also, the indicated deletion change in claim 20 is not accurate. It is indicated the "18" has been deleted when it should be --19-- that is deleted as claim 20 originally depended from claim 19.
>
> Notice of Non-Complaint Amendment

Claims 87-122 have been cancelled and the text of the claims stricken to clarify the status of these claims. Further, claim 20 has been amended to reflect the proper dependency of original claim 20.

Election/Restriction

The Examiner states:

> "Applicant election with traverse of Group 1, claims 1-43, in the replay filed on 08 March 2007 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that claim 44 has been amended and thus there is no combination/subcombination type claiming. This argument is persuasive for claims 44-86. These claims are hereby joined with the combination claims of elected group 1. However, claims 87 and 108 have not been likewise amended. The claims are still directed to the subcombination and will not be joined with the elected group."
>
> Office Action, page 2, paragraph 1

Applicants, thank the Examiner for joining claims 44-86 with Group I claims 1-43, and elect joined Group I, claims 1-86. Accordingly claims 87-122 are canceled.

Drawings

The Examiner states:

> "The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 183(a). The drawings must show every feature if the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the stiffness reducing grooves must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). Now new matter should be entered."
>
> Office action, page 2, paragraph 3.

Claim 12, has been amended to remove any reference to the "stiffness reducing grooves. Further, Claim 65 has been amended to correct an inadvertent error in the claim referencing a "groove" when clearly the reference should be to an "annular slot". Support for the amendment of claim 65 occurs in the specification at least at page 15, line 29 to page 30, line 4 and in the drawings at FIG. 4 and 5A. No new matter is introduced by this claim amendment as the "annular slot 58" was fully disclosed and supported in the specification and drawings as filed.

For at least the above reasons, applicants submit the drawings show every feature of the invention specified in the claims in accordance with the requirements of 37 CFR 183(a). Accordingly, applicant's respectfully request withdrawal of the objection to the drawings.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §112

The Examiner states:

> "Claims 4-40 rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention."
>
> Office Action, page 3, paragraph 3.

Regarding claims 4-13, claims 4-11 have been cancelled. The subject matter of claims 4-11 is incorporated into currently amended claim 12 rewritten to include all the limitations of the base original claim 1 and intervening original claims 4-11. Claim 13 depends from claim 12.

Accordingly, the rejection of claims 4-13 under 35 USC §112 is discussed below with reference to claim 12 under "Allowable Subject Matter".

Regarding claims 14-17, claims 14-17 have been canceled obviating the rejection of claims 14-17 under 35 USC §112, second paragraph.

Regarding claims 18-33, claims 18 and 19 have been canceled. The subject mater of claims 18-19 is incorporated into currently amended claim 20 rewritten to include all the limitations of the base original claim 1 and intervening original claims 4-6, 18, and 19. Claims 21-26 depend directly or indirectly from claim 20. Claim 27 has been amended to depend from claim 20. Claims 28-33 depend directly or indirectly from claim 27. Accordingly, the rejection of 18-33 under 35 USC §112 is discussed below with reference to claim 20 under "Allowable Subject Matter"..

Regarding claims 34-40, claim 34 has been canceled. The subject mater of claim 34 is incorporated into currently amended claim 35 rewritten to include all the limitation of the base original claim 1 and intervening original claim 34. Claims 36-40 depend directly or indirectly from claim 35. Accordingly, the rejection of 34-40 under 35 USC §112 is discussed below with reference to claim 35 under "Allowable Subject Matter".

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §102

The Examiner states:

> "Claims 1-11, 14-16, 18, 19, 34, 43, 44, 55-62, 66 and 86 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Ponsell (US patent 2,752,625)."
>
> Office action page 4, paragraph 3

Claims 1-11, 14-16, 18, 19, 34, 43, 44, 55-62, 66 and 86 are canceled, obviating the rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. 102(b).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §103

The Examiner states:

> Claim 17 is rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ponsell (US patent 2,752,625)
>
> Office action, page 5, paragraph 5

Claim 17 has been canceled, obviating the rejection of claim 17 under 35 USC §103(a).

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner states:

> Claims 12, 13, 20-33, 35-40 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 USC §112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in the Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.
>
> Office action, page 6, paragraph 2

Regarding claims 12 and 13, claim 12 is rewritten to include all of the limitations the base original claim 1 and of cancelled intervening original claims 4-11. With reference to the rejection of intervening original claim 4 under 35 USC §112, 2nd paragraph, the Examiner states:

> "In claim 4, lines 2+, defining that the neck portion has a cross-sectional dimension smaller than that of the fitment post appears improper since the neck portion is part of or makes up the fitment post."
>
> Office Action, page 3, paragraph 4 .

Claim 12 is currently amended to delete the reference to the "fitment post" contained in intervening original claim 4. Claim 12, as currently amended, reads in pertinent part: "said neck portion having a transverse cross-sectional dimension smaller than that of the retaining head." Support for the amendment of claim 12 is found at least at page 17, lines 18-24, and in the drawings at FIG. 6. Applicants submit that, currently amended and rewritten claim 12

overcomes the rejection under 35 USC §112, 2nd paragraph, and that one of skill in the art would understand the subject matter being claimed in claim 12 as currently amended.

For the above reasons, Applicants submit that claim 12 as rewritten and currently amended is allowable. Claim 13 depends directly from claim 12 and is allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 12. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of claims 12 and 13.

Regarding claims 20-26, claim 20 is rewritten to include all of the limitations of the base original claim 1 and canceled intervening original claims 4-6, 18, and 19. As described directly above with reference to claim 12, claim 20 is further currently amended to delete the reference to the "fitment post" contained in intervening original claim 4. Finally Claim 20 has been amended to correct the inaccuracy noted by the Examiner in the Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment. Applicants submit that, currently amended and rewritten claim 20 overcomes the rejection under 35 USC §112, 2nd paragraph, and that one of skill in the art would understand the subject matter being claimed in claim 20 as currently amended.

For the above reasons, Applicants submit that claim 20 is allowable. Claims 21-26 depend directly or indirectly from claim 20 and are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 20. Applicants respectfully request allowance of claims 20-26.

Regarding claims 27-33, with reference to the rejection of original claim 27 under 35 USC §112, 2nd paragraph, the Examiner states:

> "In claim 27, there is no antecedent basis for 'said release device'. It appears claim 27 was to depend from claim 20 and not from claim 19 as it further defines the structure set forth in claim 20. The claim has been treated as such"
> [Office action, page 3, paragraph 6]

Applicants confirm that claim 27 is to depend from claim 20 and not from claim 19. Accordingly, claim 27 is currently amended to depend directly from claim 20. Applicants

apologize for any inconvenience, confusion, and additional effort this dependency error caused the Examiner.

For the above reasons, Applicants submit that currently amended claim 27 is allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 20. Claims 28-33 depended directly or indirectly from claim 20 through currently amended claim 27 and are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 20. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of claims 27-33.

Regarding claims 35-40, claim 35 is rewritten to include the all the limitation of the base original claim 1 and canceled intervening original claim 34. With reference to the rejection of intervening original claim 34 under 35 USC §112, 2nd paragraph, the Examiner states:

> "In claim 34, lines 6-7, the phrase 'when in the gripping mechanism is in a gripping position' is unclear. It is not clear exactly what is being claimed"
> [Office action, page 4, paragraph 1]

Claim 35 is currently amended to delete the first "in" in the specified phrase as contained in canceled intervening original claim 34. Claim 35, as currently amended, reads in pertinent part: "when the gripping mechanism is in a gripping position" Support for the amendment of claim 35 is found in the specification at least at page 12, lines 20-27 and in the drawings at FIGS 1 and 5A. Applicants submit that, currently amended and rewritten claim 35 overcomes the rejection under 35 USC §112, 2nd paragraph, and that one of skill in the art would understand the subject matter being claimed in claim 35.

For the above reasons, Applicants submit that currently amended claim 35 is allowable, Claims 36-40 depend directly or indirectly from claim 35 and claims 36-40 are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 35. Applicant respectfully request allowance of claims 35-40.

The Examiner further states

> "Claims 41, 42. 45-54, 63, 64, 65 and 67-85 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be

allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims." [Office action page 6, paragraph 3]

Regarding claims 41 and 42, claim 41 has been rewritten to include all the limitation of canceled base original claim 1.

For the above reason, Applicants submit that claim 41 is allowable. Claim 42 depends from claim 41 and is allowable for at least the same reason as rewritten claim 41. Applicants respectfully request allowance of claims 41 and 42.

Regarding claims 45-52, claim 45 has been rewritten to include all the limitation of canceled base claim 44 as previously amended.

For the above reason, Applicants submit that claim 45 is allowable. Claims 46-52 depend directly or indirectly from claim 45 and are allowable for at least the same reasons as rewritten claim 45. Applicant respectfully request allowance of claims 45-52.

Regarding claims 53 and 54, claim 53 has been rewritten to include all the limitations of canceled base claim 44, as previously amended.

For the above reason, Applicants submit that claim 53 is allowable. Claim 54 depends directly claim 53 and is allowable for at least the same reasons as rewritten claim 53. Applicant respectfully request allowance of claims 53 and 54.

Regarding claims 63-65, claim 63 has been has been rewritten to include all the limitation of canceled base claim 44, as previously amended, and canceled intervening original claims 55-59. Claims 64 and 65 depend directly or indirectly from claim 63. As noted above with reference to the objection to the Drawings, claim 65 has been amended to correct an inadvertent error in the claim referencing a "groove" when clearly the reference should be to an "annular slot". Support for the amendment of claim 65 occurs in the specification at least at page 15, line 29 to page 30, line 4 and in the drawings at FIG. 4 and 5A. No new matter is introduced by this claim amendment as the "annular slot 58" was fully disclosed and supported in the

specification and drawings as filed. Accordingly claims 64 and 65 are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 63. Applicants respectfully request allowance of claims 63-65.

Regarding claims 67-85, Claim 67 has been has been rewritten to include all the limitation of canceled base claim 44, as previously amended, and canceled intervening original claims 55-59 and 66. For the above reason, Applicants submit that claim 67 is allowable. Claims 68-85 depend directly or indirectly from claim 67 and are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 67. Applicants respectfully request allowance of claims 67-85.

CONCLUSIONS

In view of the foregoing remarks, Claims 12, 13, 20-33, 35-40, 41, 42. 45-54, 63-65, and 67-85 are allowable. Applicants submit that no new matter has been introduced as a result of the rewriting and amendments to the claims herein and that the application is in a condition for allowance. If, however, some issue remains which the Examiner feels may be addressed by further discussion, the Examiner is cordially invited to call the undersigned for any clarification.

Please charge any additional fees, including fees for additional extensions of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 03 2270.

Respectfully submitted,

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